

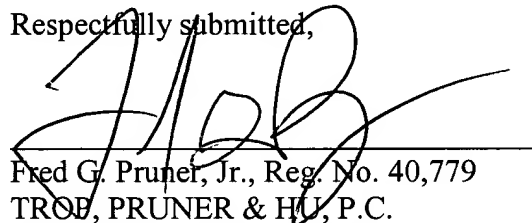
REMARKS

In the Office Action mailed on November 5, 2002, the Examiner rejected independent claims 1, 6 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by Bohm. The publication date of Bohm is May 7, 1998. However, for at least the reason that the inventors in the present application conceived the invention before May 7, 1998, and a constructive reduction to practice was achieved by filing the patent application, removal of Bohm as a § 102(a) reference is requested. In support of this request, attached is a Declaration by the undersigned pursuant to 37 CFR § 1.131. Claims 2-5, 7-10 and 19-21 are patentable for at least the reason that these claims depend from allowable claims. Therefore, withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1-10 and 18-21 is requested. Newly added claims 22-24 are patentable over the cited art.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, withdrawal of the §§ 102 and 103 rejections and a favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance are requested. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 20-1504 (ITL.0061US).

Respectfully submitted,



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